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REMARKS OF

LT. GENERAL CHARLES P. CABELL, USAF

AT THE

TENTH AGENCY ORIENTATION COURSE

5 May 1953

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Col. Baird and fellow members of CIA: You know that "fellow members of CIA" business sounds pretty good to me, a little strange, but still pretty good. This is my first speech since assuming the Office of Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, and I am pleased that the occasion is a training program of our own. The strength of the Central Intelligence Agency, or any organization for that matter, depends to a large degree upon the brand and amount of training given to the men and women doing the various tasks. Maybe you notice my using the words "our own," which I have done with deliberate pride, because this is one method of driving home to myself the fact that I am now part of that Agency with which I've worked for a good number of years. I have always acknowledged this Agency as possessing a unique responsibility in the field of intelligence. Not only is the Director of Central Intelligence the leader in coordinating all efforts to produce the best national intelligence, but the whole Agency shares that leadership responsibility. Now, I find myself with you, as an integral part of this leadership function, and in the position of having to "put up or shut up." My intention is to "put up."

Many of you know that I have spent considerable time during the past few months going from office to office in the Agency, to be thoroughly briefed on organization and functions and current problems. I assure you that I could have spent much more time to very good advantage on these subjects that were covered with a degree of thoroughness which I appreciate. Since I have heard and read so much about our Agency, perhaps you would be interested in some of my impressions.

First, it is generally easy for any of us to distinguish between a "staged event" put on to impress, and the telling of a genuine story. I think that I heard genuine stories. Thus, as the personnel of the various offices explained their responsibilities and described their functions, I acquired a conviction of competence and dedication to their work. In every segment of the Agency I found men and women who did not appear to have attributes of "clock watchers," merely filling-in their time. Rather, they appeared to have a profound appreciation of why they were performing certain duties in this complex pattern of national intelligence. They seemed to know full well that in this intelligence business, there is no limit to the amount of time one can devote to it. An intelligence worker can always "dig a little deeper."

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When I considered that little over a decade ago no such structure as this existed, I was given a sense of confidence by the thoroughness of the continuing development of the Agency. I met collectors, linguists, couriers, coordinators, producers of estimates, administrative officials, clerical and secretarial personnel, lawyers, training officers, scientists, economists, operators, area specialists, machine experts, librarians, and a host of other categories that comprise the units of teamwork we call the CIA. It is obvious that one coach, whether he be Director or Deputy Director, cannot call all the signals to make the moves of national intelligence click with efficiency, which they must do in the vital interest of the security of our nation. Hence, my feeling of confidence was indeed great when I noted the assumption of individual responsibility by each one in the several offices of the organization. Working in this fashion, under the policies and regulations promulgated throughout the Agency, brings assurance of success in attaining our goals.

Besides the attitude of sincerity toward one's task, whatever it might be, I was also impressed by the efficiency of the product. Systems have been designed on the job, and adopted, to sift through the multitude and variety of material collected by the Departments and by CIA. Production machinery now works well to render support to the estimating function, both in CIA and the Departments. These are but two examples of worthwhile performances.

As I went through these pleasant experiences, I could not but feel that attitudes were outstandingly good, efficiency was of high calibre, and that all shared a conviction that our work here is of vital importance.

I noticed some other things too:

First, the Agency has had its share of organizational changes in the past few years. Having known the Agency for quite a long time with a certain degree of intimacy, I feel that the pattern of changes was needed to bring that strength of operation which now exists in our several functions. However, regardless of the benefits achieved by the alteration and modification of functions, I am very conscious of the human element which might be lost and receive no sympathetic consideration or explanation in the flux of change. From my observation, I believe that most of you must have had knowledge of the weaknesses, and a clear conviction of the reasons for adopting the new methods and procedures, because you now speak and act with assurances of strength.

A second thing I noticed was that the Agency has achieved stature, and you carry on with a unity of purpose even though you are scattered all over town and in a variety of buildings. Many of these buildings are hardly soundproof enough to shelter a noisy argument. Though my old Alma Mater, the Pentagon, has been the butt of many jokes--some good--I must admit that the massive structure, by providing space for most military intelligence activities, does ease many problems which unfortunately we must continue to live with--at least for the time being--in CIA. The time consumed between

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buildings, the difficulties of security which increase in direct proportion to the number of locations, the human lethargy generated by distance which discourages persons getting together on items that could benefit by the "personal" touch, all these and many more problems will continue as long as we are housed in the bit and piece fashion.

Now that I've told you how I feel about you, you'll have to figure out for yourselves what to expect from me. Here are some indicators. Basically, you should know that I consider this a most important assignment, and that I come into it with enthusiasm. Having spent my entire adult life in the military service, I might be expected to consider this as merely another change of duty for me. Such is not the case. Let me assure you that I burned many bridges in the Air Force and, with a freedom of decision, cast my lot with you. I did so because I consider these functions, of producing national intelligence estimates and of coordinating the total intelligence effort of our Federal Government, of essential and prime importance if our policies are to possess the strength and accuracy to save civilization. Furthermore, instead of hastening into the job, I was doubly pleased to wait and to study the Agency, until the legislation covering my position was fully clarified, because I hope to be here a good long time.

Many persons too often jump to the conclusion that the arrival of a new official means inevitable drastic change in organization. Rest assured, however, that I, for one, come with no bias for alteration, and my words of sincere congratulations to you should assure you that what I saw and heard gave me confidence in present procedures. However, while I do not favor radical, revolutionary changes in the activities of any agency, I am a firm believer in evolutionary modifications which are made with temperate and thoughtful steps.

Therefore, I hope that we will never just tread water to keep ourselves abreast of events, but will always be alert to the necessity for developing and improving our methods. Without this approach, we could easily stagnate in mediocrity.

CIA is a tremendous challenge to all of us as individuals--and to all of us as members of a collective team.

All tasks to a degree are challenges, of course. Let me explain why I feel that this, as I see it, is something of a unique challenge.

CIA is engaged in a variety of intelligence activities and special operations, which have been housed in a single agency. The very job of conducting our work without disclosing our hand presents a tremendous obstacle.

Our intelligence work is carried on at a time when we are in greater need of good intelligence than at any time in the history of this nation. Sound National Policy and the success of our Armed Forces may be determined to a large extent, as well as those of the service intelligence agencies, by the

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success or failure of CIA effort. With this tremendous responsibility resting on our shoulders, we naturally would expect to look to the "old hands"--to the veterans of OSS and CIA. When we do this, we find that our Agency is so new that few men have more than six years of service--only rarely do we find one with ten years of service. There are few "old timers." The mantle of our great responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of the very fine group of competent young men and women who now occupy the key positions in CIA. I might add that I served in England for a time in World War II and was in close touch with British Intelligence. That service has been in existence for generations. Yet today, as America assumes its heavy if not fundamental responsibilities in world affairs, we have little tradition in strategic intelligence. And so the very newness of our service, when related to the scope of its task, presents one of our great challenges.

We work, as I am sure you have already noticed, in a highly specialized atmosphere. It is certainly not an atmosphere for the faint of heart and those who are discouraged easily. To the conscientious and able, I believe it offers a wonderful opportunity.

Each day brings new tasks to CIA, which in some respects are unique. It is challenging to play a part in helping to solve these problems.

As we progress or as we encounter obstacles in our work, I believe we might profitably read again the history of the United States to refresh ourselves on the tremendous obstacles that our Forebears overcame. For, in the final analysis, the development of this Agency is a part of the growing maturity of Americaas a nation. While we do not travel as rough a road as the pioneers, there will be times when it appears as rough. It certainly is not always smooth. I am proud to have a part in this development, just as I know you are. One of the reasons that our intelligence service is so new is that we were reluctant for years to admit that participation in intelligence was a nationally permissible activity. Even today, as a nation, we tend to be very conservative regarding our political and psychological roles.

As for this Agency, it is important for us to understand that in many respects we are here to provide certain intelligence to the military services. It is likewise important that the military services understand our general objectives and capabilities. Effectiveness cannot be achieved unless the efforts of CIA and the efforts of the Department of Defense are brought into complete harmony. There is nothing more useless than highly organized military force lacking in intelligence. Perhaps one thing is more useless--a carefully documented intelligence report which is confined in its distribution and not made available to the military commanders. The two--intelligence and military power--are completely interdependent. To help bring them into correct relationship and to keep them there, is one of our constant challenges.

Because of my experience with Air Intelligence and with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I hope to be helpful in continuing the marked improvement in mutual

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understanding between CIA and the Department, which has taken place during the past two years. Along this line, I like to insist on the thought that "Departments" and "Agencies" as such do not exist, for these are just general words covering a lot of people. Hence, the lessening and elimination of problems can be done by bringing persons together. This personal approach begets confidence and efficient results.

With the growth in size of organization and the development of complexities, we are compelled to allot functions and to divide tasks because of the pressure of time and the need for expert advice. This trend toward categories of "experts" creates the real but inevitable danger of putting blinkers over our vision of the total task to be done. The overemphasis of the segment distorts the whole product. This very human trait is augmented by the physical arrangement of our offices where distance might easily lend a false independence to what is being performed. Accordingly, I would like to remind you that while we must ever strive to get the best information on any pertinent subject and be able to refine and distill the products in minute fashion, we must never lose our focus on the total job to be done. In most positive manner, each person must do his or her task with the ever present recognition that said task is a piece of a jigsaw, which will have usefulness only when properly aligned with many other pieces to form a picture.

I shall conclude my remarks with a reminder that the most important factor for our success is the proper handling of people, at all levels throughout the Agency. This job cannot be left to chance. It must ever be done with education which comes from full knowledge and appreciation of duties. Our strength of the present and our advance for the future depends wholly on getting the best candidates, and on preparing them to assume their duties with zeal and competency. Experience has shown that we cannot go to the outside and get from academic institutions or from industry persons who can immediately be classed as "intelligence officers." Therefore, I am glad that we have developed under General Smith and our new Director, Mr. Dulles, the framework of a competent career system. This career service program and the various mechanisms which are to make it work comprise the very backbone for strength in the long-term approach of all our tasks. Its aim is to assure that we always get the best equipped person in the most appropriate spot, so that he can turn out the best product. That is the best way I know of for assuring good morale.

This reminds us that when individuals are selected to come into such a system, they should never overlook the fundamental point that throughout their career in intelligence the selectivity factor is recurring constantly as persons are being considered for certain jobs. Thus competency is continually being evaluated. This is where the ever-present task of training is conspicuous, to equip our people with the needed skills.

Throughout my remarks this morning I stressed the importance of the personal element in all we do. Therefore, I hope that I can live up to my own resolution to visit with you often and keep close to what you are doing.

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